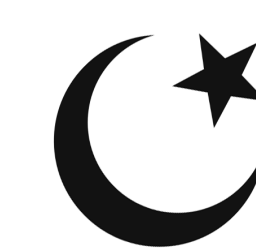




# Language/Cognition Components of Religious Expression for Clients Living Post CVA



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**Abstract:** This presentation will provide information on the difficulties related to language and cognition clients face pertaining to the expression of their religious beliefs after a CVA. The three most common types of aphasia (Broca's Wernicke's, and Global) that commonly follow a CVA will be defined. The impact on emotional and cognitive functioning due an inability to fully engage in religious practices will be discussed. Lastly, interventions to be used by SLPs to support language use and cognitive functioning in avenues of religious expression will be explained.

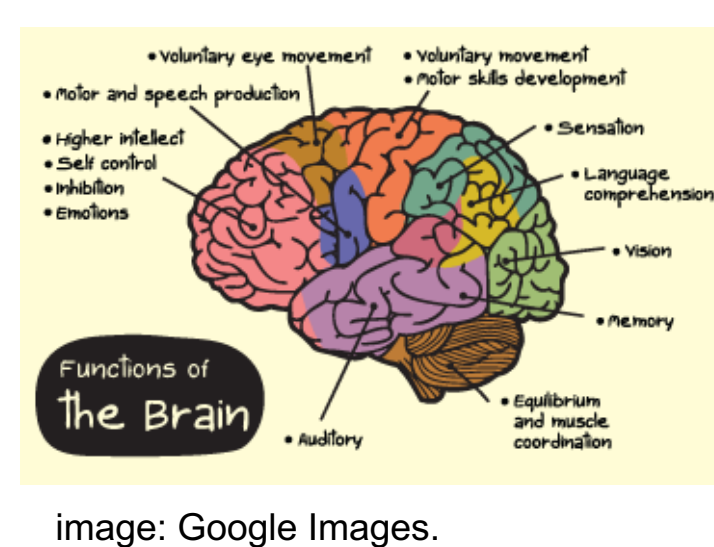
## Post-Stroke Diagnosis of Aphasia:

"Aphasia is present in 21-38% of acute stroke individuals." (Berthier, 2005). Aphasia in a general sense is defined as an acquired impairment impacting the complexities of language comprehension and expression, caused by damage in cortical and subcortical structures. (Berthier, 2005) The most commonly occurring subtypes of aphasia include:

- ❖ BROCA'S APHASIA → (Non-fluent, expressive aphasia) "Said to be characterized by non-fluent, sparse and effortful speech output, with reduced phrase length and syntactic complexity." (Vudović, 2018).
- ❖ WERNICKE'S APHASIA → (Fluent, receptive aphasia) Characterized by an inability to comprehend verbal or written language.
- ❖ GLOBAL APHASIA → (Non-fluent, receptive and expressive aphasia) Characterized by profound impairment in both expressive and receptive language abilities.

## Impact of Stroke on Cognition: (Lee & Pyun, 2014), (Anom Ahmad et al, 2014)

- + Visuospatial skills
- + Attention
- + Memory
- + Executive functioning



## Impact on Religious Expression:

Cognitive impact:

- Inability to initiate to engage in private or communal prayer
- Inability to attend during private or personal prayer
- Inability to sequence steps for prayer activities

Language impact:

- Limited ability to participate in group/communal prayer
- Inability to comprehend talks, sermons, homilies, or led spoken prayers
- Problems engaging in group discussion about religious texts
- Possible problems with reading religious texts
- Impacted ability to participate in rituals or sacraments

## Importance of Religious Expression for Patients living post CVA:

- Ability to participate in religious practices protects from emotional distress post stroke (Caracciolo, B., Giaquinto, S., Spiridigliozzi, C., 2007)
- Ability to participate in religious practices facilitates greater social support and fewer depressive symptoms in hospitalized patients (George, Koenig, & Titus, 2004)
- Difficulties with emotional distress/psychosocial functioning following a stroke will not only negatively impact quality of life, but also efficacy of rehabilitation post stroke. (Aadal et al. 2018)
- Research states: ... "this (religious expression) is important because spirituality may be a helpful component to recovery, understanding, and acceptance of life changes associated with aphasia" (Davis et. al, 2018)
- However, there is minimal research on the outcomes of integrating religious topics into speech therapy.

## The Role of the SLP:

- Take the client's lead during treatment. Do not assume they want their goals to focus on their religion, but do not minimize or neglect this if the client states it is something they want to work on.
- The treating SLP should be sure to **Educate themselves**. If the client wants to work on participating in their faith, research the faith traditions and ask the client about their experience.
- Utilize pictures and objects to make abstract ideas more concrete. (Mackenzie, 2016)
- **Integrate** components of the client's faith into pre-existing research supported aphasia protocols:
  - Treatment for Wernicke's Aphasia (TWA): Include target words relevant to the client's faith practices.
  - Melodic Intonation Therapy (MIT): (Hébert, Pertez, & Zumbansen, 2014) utilize this approach while integrating prayers and religious speech to support connected speech of those impacted by Broca's aphasia.
- Integrate components of the client's faith into cognitive therapy for attention, memory, executive functioning, and visuospatial skills
  - Sequencing tasks relating to prayer preparation (for example, Salat)
  - Sustained attention tasks targeting prayer (i.e., the Rosary)
- **Continue** to advocate for research about integration of religious expression into structured speech therapy.

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